

A LEAFLET OF THE SEAL HARBOR VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

[It is well known that in the neighborhood of our summer resorts, many of our native plants are becoming less abundant every year, and some of them are in great danger of extermination. The number of plants gathered by plant lovers for various purposes is far greater than one would suppose. A year ago it was suggested to the Village Improvement Society at Seal Harbor, Maine, that something might be done to check unnecessary and careless gathering of the native plants in that part of Mount Desert Island. In consequence of this suggestion a committee was appointed to consider the matter. As one result of this action a circular was prepared by two members of the committee, Prof. Samuel F. Clarke and Mrs. Frances Theodora Parsons, which was widely distributed through the village. So many instances have been observed in which the recommendations of this circular have been adopted by the summer visitors that it seems well to give it a still wider circulation. It is therefore reprinted below with only a few unimportant omissions relating to local plants.—Ed.]

It is to the interest of every visitor to Mount Desert that its beautiful and characteristic plants be guarded from extermination. It is believed that everyone will be ready to aid in this work if once he, or she, fully realizes the danger with which these plants are now threatened.

It is not our wish to discourage unnecessarily the gathering of wild flowers and ferns for decorative purposes. We ask only that they be picked with care and discrimination. Such a flower, for example, as the blue-bell, which forms so beautiful a feature on the rocks along the shore, should always be cut with the scissors or a knife,* rather than picked, to prevent its being uprooted, and even when cut, care should be taken to gather it only where it grows most abundantly, that no picturesque tuft be so completely done away with as to set no seeds for another year.

Where there is an especially fine plant or colony, or where there is a single plant or small colony, why not leave at least half the flowers for seed, in the one case giving nature a chance to perpetuate and develop the best, and in the other, helping nature to extend her work of beautifying our surroundings?

The pink lady-slipper, or moccasin flower, the purple fringed orchid, the Calopogon, Pogonia, and indeed all the orchids, should be cut (not picked) fairly high up the stem, leaving, whenever possible the lower leaves intact.

If these flowers are not to be exterminated they should not be gathered at all unless found growing very abundantly, and then only

in moderation. Such fragile blossoms are more effective if not heavily massed, but arranged a few sprays by themselves.

From the purchase of the rarer flowers, especially of the purple-fringed orchid, by the roadside, we urge everyone to abstain. The country children who offer them for sale, are, innocently enough, the most dangerous enemies of all rare, salable flowers.

Ferns, also, should be picked with care, and not too freely, unless in spots where they are unusually abundant. The same caution should be used against breaking branches from shrubs and trees in so rude a fashion as not only to cause a temporary disfigurement, but perhaps a permanent injury.

The hobble-bush, whose effective leaves and brilliant berries decorate gaily the woods of late summer is frequently a victim to careless picking.

The flowers growing in the immediate neighborhood of the roadside are a joy to the many. Is it too much to ask that these be left to delight the eyes of the passer-by, and that the flowers desired for decorative purposes be sought a few feet from the highway, or even from the trail? These roadside plants are constantly enjoyed by those who, by reason of age or some infirmity, could otherwise never see them. Were this once realized few would hesitate to take the trouble entailed by half a dozen extra steps.

We should not fail to add that many of the most effective flowers may be gathered away from the wayside without fear of doing any permanent injury. Daisies, buttercups, clover, wild roses, meadow-sweet, steeple-bush, asters, golden-rod, and other vigorous and abundantly growing plants will yield ample material for decoration and may be gathered almost with impunity.

To sum up we urge:

1st. Moderation. (Not gathering too many flowers of the same kind in one locality.)

2nd. Care. (The use of scissors or knife.)

3rd. Judgment. (Guarding the roadside and conspicuous locations.)

4th. Occasional total abstinence. (In case of especially rare flowers.)